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of Western Ornithology

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EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

Word has been received from Mr. Edmund Heller, who has just returned to Washington at the close of his year in the field, collecting African mammals in the party headed by Colonel Roosevelt. That the expedition was highly successful in the collection of zoological specimens is well known, but Mr. Heller also speaks most enthusiastically of the many enjoyable features of the trip. The party proved very congenial and no serious mishaps or accidents were suffered at any time—subjects for congratulation on so long a trip in such a difficult country. Mr. Heller's present address is the United States National Museum, Department of Mammals, but he anticipates a year's work on the specimens secured, most of which time will be spent in London and Berlin.

Mr. Walter P. Taylor, with two assistants, leaves on May 15 for a summer's trip into the Warner Mountains of northeastern California. The expedition will collect birds, mammals and reptiles for the University of California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, in which institution Mr. Taylor is Assistant Curator of Mammals. The results of this trip should certainly be of great interest, especially so taken in connection with the collections made by him in northwestern Nevada during the past summer.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

A HISTORY OF THE BIRDS OF KENT. By NORMAN F. TICEHURST, M. A., F. R. C. S., F. Z. S., M. B. O. U. With twenty-four plates and a map. Witherby & Co., London, 1909—8 vo. pp. i-lix + 1—568. Price 21s. net.

This is a carefully detailed account of the birds found in a comparatively limited territory (the County of Kent, we are told, comprises some 1554 square miles). In the introduction descriptions are given of the geology, topography, and physiography of the region, as well as historical sketches of the various museums and collections contained in the county, while several pages are devoted to a discussion of the somewhat complex migratory movements of the birds, as here observed.

In the 557 pages in which they are treated in detail, 312 species are included, as well as forty-two "doubtful species." The author appears to be concerned mainly in the manner of occurrence of the birds listed, and this, as well as the historical aspect of the case, is treated in the greatest detail. In the cases of the rarer species each individual specimen seems to have been looked up, and verified or discredited, as it might be, so carefully that the book should certainly be considered as authoritative in this regard. The author is certainly commendably conservative in declining to accept doubtful records, and need hardly apologize for discrediting the one relating to the alleged occurrence of the White-winged Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*), on the basis of birds seen by "an anonymous correspondent's friend's gardener"!

Nesting and other habits are dismissed with but slight consideration, for reasons given in the preface, tho in some instances—notably the House Sparrow and the Starling, as of interest in this country—the question as to the harmful or beneficial nature of the bird is discussed at some length.

In regard to the "vexed question of nomenclature", binomials are adhered to except where two or more geographical races of the same species have occurred in the county, or where the British form of a species is recognized as distinct from the continental, in which cases the trinomial is employed—such exceptions being so numerous that it seems as tho it would have been simpler to have used the latter system throughout.

The illustrations, of birds and of general views of the country, are attractive and interesting; while a quite extensive bibliography and an appended map add much to the value of the book. Altogether such a work, carefully done as this appears to have been, cannot fail to be of great value. Altho individuals may regret the absence of more extended comment on phases of the subject in which they are more directly interested, still the recording of facts, the statement of conditions as they have been and as they are, cannot fail to be of greater and greater value as time goes on, and the future worker in British ornithology should find such a book as this of the greatest assistance in his labors.

H. S. S.